National Security Report

Background and Perspective on Important National Security and Defense Policy Issues, Written and Produced by

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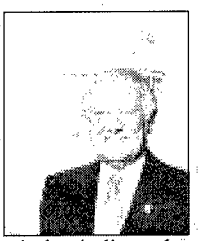
From the Chairman...



After listening to the Rumsfeld Commission's classified briefing, I believe it is safe to say that the unanimous and bipartisan conclusions reached by the Commission indicate that the intelligence community and, therefore, policymakers may be seriously underestimating and miscalculating the threat to all Americans posed by ballistic missiles.

Consistent with its mandate, the Commission assessed the ballistic missile threat, and reported the most serious national security warning the American people have received since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, the conclusions reached by the Commission suggest that the ballistic missile threat to the United States is a serious one today, not somewhere in the future, and is rapidly growing. In addition, the report contains an especially disturbing conclusion that ballistic missile threats will likely manifest themselves sooner than we think, leaving little time or ability for the Nation to respond.

I am also struck by the Commission's finding that the ballistic missile threat to the United States is, quote, "broader, more mature, and evolving more rapidly that it has been reported in estimates and reports by the intelligence community." Furthermore, as a longtime critic of this and previous administration's export control policy, I am not surprised by the Commission's finding that the progres-

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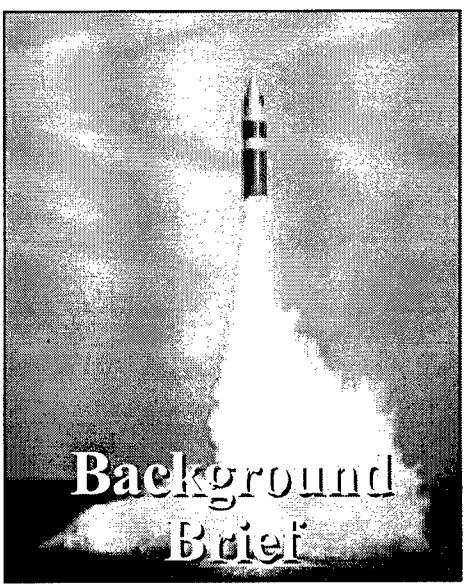
The Rumsfeld Report: *A Wake-up Call for All Americans*

Unveiling the Ballistic Missile Threat:
The Ramifications of the Rumsfeld Report

Developing and deploying systems to defend against ballistic missiles has been a highly controversial issue since 1983, when President Reagan first challenged the scientific community to develop ways of rendering nuclear ballistic missiles "impotent and obsolete." Indeed, this challenge remains a formidable one, and the task of destroying ballistic missiles after launch is often likened to "hitting a bullet with a bullet." However, the technology to intercept and destroy ballistic missiles in flight has improved dramatically since President Reagan's challenge, and recent advances in interceptor and sensor technology have increased confidence within the missile defense community that effective missile defenses are possible.



The Evolution of Ballistic Missile Defense Policy

United States policy toward ballistic missile defense (BMD) has also evolved since 1983. Along with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the need to defend against thousands of incoming Soviet nuclear warheads has diminished, greatly simplifying the challenge of building an effective defensive system. As such, plans for a national missile defense (NMD) system have been scaled back dramatically, and now focus on defending against a limited strike resulting from an accidental or unauthorized launch, or from the actions of a rogue state.

Despite the diminished likelihood of a massive Soviet first-strike nuclear attack, strains in the post-Soviet command and control system have increased concern over the risk of an accidental or unauthorized launch. The former National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs at the Central Intelligence Agency, David Osias, testified to Congress that the command and control system in Russia is being buffeted by "stresses and risks it was not designed to withstand," and a recent CIA analysis reportedly concluded last year that Russia's command and control systems "continue to degrade."

The uncertainties related to the command and control of former Soviet nuclear forces have led some in Congress to call for accelerated efforts to develop and deploy a national missile defense system to protect against the threat of accidental or unauthorized ballistic missile launch. In addition, concern over the proliferation of ballistic missiles and technologies to rogue regimes that may seek to target the United States directly with longer-range missiles has fueled recent Congressional efforts to increase funding for NMD programs.

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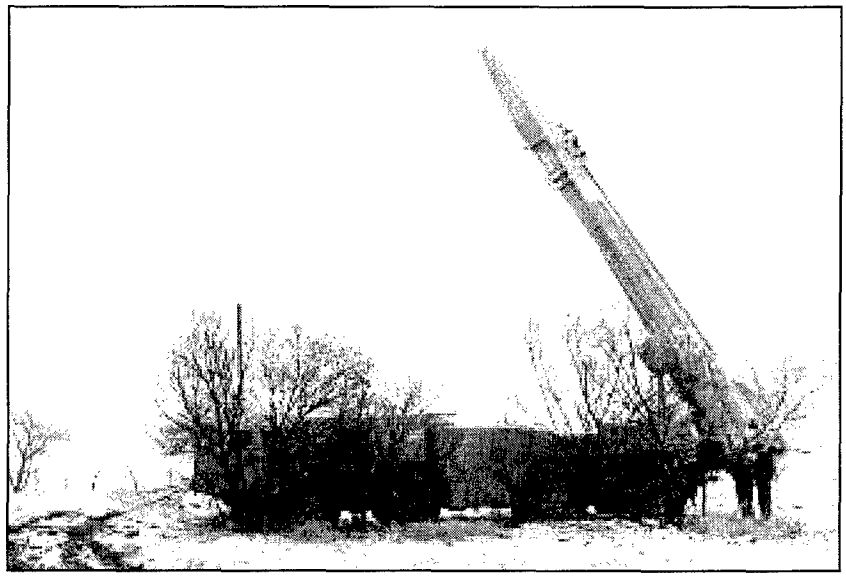
Current Administration Policies

While there is general agreement that the threat from shorter-range theater ballistic missiles is "here and now," the Administration continues to consider the strategic ballistic missile threat to be years away. As a result, research on a number of defensive concepts involving advanced BMD technologies has been reduced or abandoned. Currently, the Administration is placing emphasis on ground-based interceptor systems with significantly less potential coverage and capability than other systems. Furthermore, the Administration has indicated that U.S. policy shall be to maintain the "integrity and viability" of the 1972 U.S-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which limits the United States to one ground-based anti-ballistic missile site.



Despite the technical challenges inherent in developing systems to counter ballistic missiles, like the Scud missile pictured above, recent advances in interceptor and sensor technology have increased confidence within the missile defense community that effective missile defenses are both possible and feasible.

Consequently, the current NMD program budget does not support the deployment of a national missile defense system. Under the Administration's "3-plus-3" program, the United States would research and develop over three years the technologies that would be sufficiently robust to support a decision to deploy a limited NMD system. This stage of the program is expected to be completed in fiscal year 2000. Actual deployment of a system, if such a decision were made, would require an additional three years. However, because of the Administration's contention that there are no near-term ballistic missile threats to the United States, there are no plans at present to deploy a national missile defense system, and funding for the procurement of long lead items necessary for deployment is absent from the Administration's five year defense program.

> ***"Ballistic missiles are attractive, and they're attractive for several reasons. There are no defenses against them. They tend to arrive at their targets."***
>
> — Former Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, in testimony before the National Security Committee on July 16, 1998

Since 1995, the Congress has called on the Administration to give greater priority to national missile defense. Deployment of national missile defenses was a key element in the Republican Congress' 1995 "Contract With America," and members of the House and Senate have repeatedly urged the Administration to commit to deployment of a NMD system. For the past several years, Congressional actions have significantly increased the level of funding for NMD. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1996 also contained a provision specifically calling for the deployment of a national missile defense system by 2003. This provision was a key reason President Clinton vetoed the bill, stating that such a commitment was "unwarranted" and "cannot be accommodated within the terms of the existing ABM Treaty." He also argued that the intelligence community "does not foresee in the coming decade" any long-range missile threat to the United States.

Is There a Threat?

The President's assertion of the lack of a near-term threat was based in part on a CIA-produced National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) released in November 1995. According to Richard Cooper, Chairman of the National Intelligence Council, the NIE concluded "that in the next 15 years no country other than the major declared nuclear powers will develop a ballistic missile that could threaten the contiguous 48 states or Canada." Supporters of the NIE cited this key conclusion as a reason not to move quickly toward deployment of a NMD system. However, critics pointed out that the estimate improperly ignored the ballistic missile threat to Alaska and Hawaii; focused on countries' intentions rather than on their missile capabilities; discounted the risk of accidental or unauthorized launch from Russia; did not address the existing threat from China's ICBM force; emphasized indigenous development of long-range missile capabilities rather than alternative means of acquisition; and failed to address the prospect that shorter-range ballistic missiles launched from platforms or territories closer to the United States could pose a threat to U.S. territory.

In the wake of the President's veto of the FY 1996 National Defense Authorization Act, and debate over the validity and possible politicization of the NIE, House National Security Committee Chairman Spence requested the General Accounting Office (GAO) review the intelligence estimate. In its August 1996 assessment, the GAO con-

cluded that the NIE "overstated" the certainty of its conclusions, contained "analytical shortcomings," and "did not explicitly identify its critical assumptions."

To further investigate this issue, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997 (Public Law 104-201) directed the Director of Central Intelligence to conduct a review of the assumptions and conclusions of the November 1995 NIE by appointing a panel of outside experts. The panel, chaired by former Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates, reported that the November 1995 NIE was "politically naïve," and that its failure to include Alaska and Hawaii was "foolish from every possible perspective." The panel concluded that the NIE was done "in haste," leading to a number of "presentational and analytical problems."

> ***"Ballistic missiles don't have to go through customs. They don't get pulled over by the police. They don't defect..."***
>
> — Former Science Advisor to the President and Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, William R. Graham, in testimony before the National Security Committee on July 16, 1998

Enter the Rumsfeld Commission

In light of this review, Chairman Spence included a provision in the FY 1997 National Defense Authorization Act to establish an independent "Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States". The commission was patterned after the "Team B" exercise in the 1970s, which successfully reviewed and critiqued the intelligence community's judgment regarding the strategic goals and objectives of the Soviet Union. This commission, however, was directed to "assess the nature and magnitude of the existing and emerging ballistic missile threat to the United States."

Once appointed by the Director of Central Intelligence (in consultation with House and Senate leadership of both political parties), the commission included many notable experts of the defense and intelligence communities including former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, former Director of Central Intelligence R. James Woolsey; former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Paul D. Wolfowitz, former Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Strategic Command General George Lee Butler, and former Air Force Chief of Staff General Larry D. Welch. Some six months after first meeting, the commissioners released their findings and conclusions in testimony to the House National Security Committee on July 16, 1998.

Of particular note, the commissioners were unanimous in concluding that ballistic missiles armed with nuclear or biological weapons "pose a growing threat to the United States, its deployed forces and its friends and allies." They noted that the threat to the United States posed by countries seeking ballistic missile capabilities "is broader, more mature and evolving more rapidly than has been reported in estimates and reports by the intelligence community." In fact, just one week after the Rumsfeld Commission publicly released their report concluding that Iran's Shahab-3 medium range ballistic missile "may be flight tested at any time and deployed soon thereafter," Iran performed the first flight test of the missile. Until recently, the intelligence community had predicted this milestone would not occur for another 12 to 18 months.

Furthermore, the commission expressed concern that "under some plausible scenarios... the U.S. might well have little or no warning" before being confronted with the operational deployment of ballistic missiles. Consequently, they called on the intelligence community to review and, as appropriate, revise its "analyses, practices and policies that depend on expectations of extended warning."

Although the Rumsfeld Commission differed from published intelligence estimates, much of this difference can be attributed to the commission's use of a more comprehensive methodology for assessing the threat. This methodology acknowledged the reality that other countries today can obtain outside technical assistance for their ballistic missile programs with relative ease. As the commission noted, "Foreign assistance is not a wild card. It is a fact. It is pervasive." In addition, the commission recognized the fact that other nations are increasingly able to conceal key elements of their missile programs.

Also of concern, the report revealed the roles of Russia and China in proliferating critical technologies to other nations and noted that it is "unlikely" that this proliferation will decline. With respect to other countries possessing shorter-range missile infrastructures, the report concluded that, with external assistance, they could develop and flight-test a long-range missile "within about five years" of a decision to do so, a period of time in which "the U.S. might not be aware that such a decision had been made." Commenting on the intelligence community's unwillingness to predict the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, General Butler testified before the House National Security Committee on July 16, 1998, "If you don't want to believe it, there is no body of evidence which cannot be ignored."

Finally, the commission called the United States "a major, albeit unintentional contributor" to the the proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction as a result of, "the illegal acquisition of U.S. designs and equipment and... the relaxation of U.S. export control policies."

From the Chairman...

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sive relaxation of U.S. export controls has made the United States, "a major, albeit unintentional contributor" to the proliferation problem.

The Commission members have performed an invaluable service by speaking forcefully and with one voice about the seriousness of the ballistic missile threats facing America. I continue to believe that the American people have been lulled into a false sense of security since the end of the Cold War and hope that the Commission's report will serve as a wakeup call for all Americans, who must realize that the world remains a dangerous place.

KEY CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMMISSION TO ASSESS THE BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES

In a unanimous report to Congress, the commission convincingly described the ballistic missile threat facing the U.S. today. The following are a few of their key conclusions.

In General

"Concerted efforts by a number of overtly or potentially hostile nations to acquire ballistic missiles with biological or nuclear payloads pose a growing threat to the United States, its deployed forces, and its friends and allies. These newer, developing threats in North Korea, Iran, and Iraq are in addition to those still posed by the existing ballistic missile arsenals of Russia and China... The newer ballistic missile-equipped nations' capabilities will not match those of U.S. systems for accuracy or reliability. However, they would be able to inflict major destruction on the U.S. within about five years of a decision to acquire such a capability (10 years in the case of Iraq). During several of those years, the U.S. might not be aware that such a decision had been made."

"The threat to the U.S. posed by these emerging capabilities is broader, more mature, and evolving more rapidly than has been reported in estimates and reports by the Intelligence Community."

"The warning times the U.S. can expect of new, threatening ballistic missile deployments are being reduced. Under some plausible scenarios — including re-basing or transfer of operational missiles, sea- and air-launch options, shortened development programs that might include testing in a third country, or some combination of these — the U.S. might well have little or no warning before operational deployment."

"We unanimously recommend that U.S. analyses, practices, and policies that depend on expectations of extended warning of deployment be reviewed and, as appropriate, revised to reflect the reality of an environment in which there may be little or no warning."

On the Russian Threat

"Russia continues to pose a ballistic missile threat to the United States, although of a different character than in the past... Still, Russian ballistic missile forces continue to be modernized and improved, although the pace of modernization has been slowed from planned schedules by economic constraints. The Russian ballistic missile early warning system and nuclear command and control system have also been affected by aging and delays in planned modernization. In the context of a crisis growing out of civil strife, present early warning and command and control weaknesses could pose a risk of unauthorized or inadvertent launch of missiles against the United States."

The Rumsfeld Commission

"Russia poses a threat to the U.S. as a major exporter of enabling technologies, including ballistic missile technologies, to countries hostile to the United States. In particular, Russian assistance has greatly accelerated Iran's ballistic missile program."

On the Chinese Threat

"China is modernizing its long-range missiles and nuclear weapons in ways that will make it a more threatening power in the event of a crisis. China's 1996 missile firings in the Taiwan Strait, aimed at intimidating Taiwan in the lead-up to its presidential election, provoked a sharp confrontation with the United States. For example, during this crisis a pointed question was posed by Lt. Gen. Xiong Guang Kai, a frequent spokesman for Chinese policy, about U.S. willingness to trade Los Angeles for Taipei. This comment seemed designed to link China's ballistic missile capabilities with its regional priorities."

"China also poses a threat to the U.S. as a significant proliferator of ballistic missiles, weapons of mass destruction and enabling technologies. It has carried out extensive transfers to Iran's solid-fueled ballistic missile program. It has supplied Pakistan with a design for a nuclear weapons and additional nuclear weapons assistance. It has even transferred complete ballistic missiles to Saudi Arabia (the 3100-km-range CSS-2) and Pakistan (the 350-km-range M-11)."

In Summary

"The behavior thus far of Russia and China makes it appear unlikely... that either government will soon effectively reduce its country's sizable transfer of critical technologies, experts, or expertise to the emerging missile powers."

"Ballistic missiles armed with WMD payloads pose a strategic threat to the United States. This is not a distant threat. Characterizing foreign assistance as a wild card is both incorrect and misleading. Foreign assistance is pervasive, enabling and often the preferred path to ballistic missile and WMD capability."

— A complete copy of the Commission's unclassified Executive Summary is available on the website of the House National Security Committee at:
http://www.house.gov/nsc